

A Service of **Midwest Energy Cooperative**

July/August 2011

# Michigan

## COUNTRY LINES



*Ways to experience*  
**Lively  
Lansing** 10

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Expectations

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In August

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Annual Report

# Look Down

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- Dale  
Holland, Michigan

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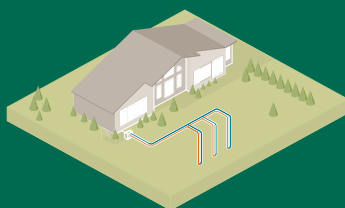
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## On the Cover

A young Lansing Lugnuts baseball fan meets the team's mascot, Big Lug.

Photo – Brendan Dwyer/Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau



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# Great Expectations

I was just trying to purchase a few last minute supplies for a family dinner. It was going to be a quick, pleasant, in-and-out kind of trip and transaction. Then I approached the check-out lane and saw the writing on the wall.

The young woman at the register was enthusiastically and vividly engaging with a co-worker about her plans for the evening. She sported the store-provided vest and nametag over what I considered to be an ill-fitting top with a short skirt and flip flops. She had more visible piercings than I could count, and hair that I can only liken to the mane on my granddaughter's now-vintage Rainbow Brite horse.

I unloaded my items onto the conveyor as I not-so-discreetly coughed and cleared my throat, hoping to make her aware of my presence before I learned even more about her life and escapades. I grew hopeful as she turned toward me, until I realized she was responding to the chirping cell phone strategically positioned near the register. She was clearly unhappy with the content of the text message as she turned back to her co-worker and shared a few choice words about Mom's decision to put the kibosh on her evening plans.

Again, well-practiced throat clearing ensued and I finally managed to get my transaction underway. I'm sure out of respect for my clear need to get through quickly and efficiently, she didn't bother with small talk or pleasantries like, "Good afternoon" or "Did you find everything you needed today?" She simply processed me and my items. I was able to select paper over plastic, at my own request, and managed to exit the store without learning more about how her boyfriend would spend the evening without her company, and her obviously inconsiderate mother.

Now I'm really not a judgmental person, but I do have a reasonable level of expectation of those who work with

me and on my behalf. I also recognize that we all have bad days, but I strongly suspect that this was more of a typical day in the life of this young employee and this retail establishment.

First impressions are critical in the world of customer service and image management, and it's a reality that is sadly lost in much of today's retail and business

environment. Many have developed more of a bottom-line mentality, ignoring the critical customer path that clearly leads to and impacts the bottom line.

One of our key focus areas at Team Midwest is, and always has been, to provide outstanding levels of customer care. We truly view you as a valued part of our extended family and strive in all we do to provide a reliable and quality experience. From what we wear to what we say to how we engage and interact, we want you to leave every interaction with a positive impression of the individual and the company.

We have paid particular attention in recent months to development among our call center representatives. They have participated in ongoing training and monitoring so that we not only meet your needs, but exceed your expectations with every contact. That doesn't mean we will always be able to provide the resolution that you want, but it does mean we will listen, acknowledge, empathize and offer alternative solutions whenever we can.

We are not people processors; we are members of your extended community that are here to provide innovations and solutions with a high level of care and compassion. It's a quality we're committed to and a value that we take to heart.



**Robert Hance**  
President/CEO

# Midwest Employees Graduate From Management Program

**T**wo Midwest Energy Cooperative employees recently completed an intensive program in electric utility management with the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Terry Rubenthaler, vice president of engineering and power supply, and Candy Riem, manager of marketing and member services, graduated from The Robert I. Kabat Management Internship Program (MIP), a series of workshops offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin. The program guides participants through all facets of the electric utility industry, including the many changes occurring around the nation.

MIP participants go through three 10-day sessions designed to challenge and educate them in new, innovative management techniques. They leave with a better understanding of what consumers want and how to ensure they get it.

By also covering the unique principles that govern the operations of electric co-ops, the program helps the co-op analyze other business ventures it may want to enter as well as enhancing the core organization.

“This is a very comprehensive and well-



Gary Pfann, PE, (center) Director of Executive and Staff Education for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, presents MIP Certificates of Completion to Midwest Energy Cooperative employees Candy Riem (left) and Terry Rubenthaler.

rounded program that will greatly enhance our ability to meet the ever-changing needs of this industry and our members,” says Bob Hance, Midwest Energy Cooperative president/CEO. “It’s an excellent investment in our team, and our members and communities will be better served as a result of our participation.”

Only electric co-op CEOs and top level managers are eligible. This allows more study of management challenges and the aspects of consumer ownership that co-ops enjoy. Participants learn to be more consumer-focused in their daily management decisions.

# College Scholarships Awarded

**M**idwest Energy Cooperative recently awarded \$500 college scholarships to four 2011 high school graduates. Applications were judged on academic achievements, school and community activities, honors and awards, and an essay.

Any high school senior whose parents or guardians receive monthly electric service from Midwest Energy and whose primary residence is in co-op service territory were eligible to apply.

“All of our award winners have demonstrated an excellent balance of academics and other involvement during their high school careers,” notes Bob Hance, Midwest’s president/CEO. “We’re proud to use this scholarship program to help support today’s student leaders on the path to becoming tomorrow’s business and community leaders.”

## 2011 scholarship winners are:



Sarah Bradtke

Sarah Bradtke, daughter of John and Patti Bradtke of Schoolcraft. Sarah is a graduate of Mattawan High School, and plans to begin studies this fall at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN.



Lila Cox

Lila Cox, daughter of Darrell and LaRena Cox of Vandalia. Lila graduated from Ross Beatty High School, and plans to study this fall at Southwestern Michigan College in Dowagiac.



Caroline Foura

Caroline Foura, daughter of Carl and Julie Foura of Three Rivers. Caroline is a graduate of Three Rivers High School, and plans to attend Kalamazoo College this fall.



Kylie Musolf

Kylie Musolf, daughter of Jon and Donna Musolf of Adrian. Kylie is a graduate of Adrian High School, and will study this fall at American University in Washington, D.C. This award was funded by Midwest and presented through the Lenawee County Education Foundation.

## Office & Holiday Closings

- The Midwest family of employees will gather for an off-site, all-employee meeting on **TUESDAY, JULY 12**. The Cassopolis and Paw Paw offices will be closed from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the Adrian and White Cloud offices will be closed for the entire day. Calls will be handled through our after-hours call center, and electric and propane crews will be available for outage and other emergency situations. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience and understanding as we bring our employee family together.
- All offices will be closed for Labor Day on **MONDAY, SEPT. 5**.

During any office closure, payments may be made online at TeamMidwest.com. You may also leave your payment in the drop box available at each office location and it will be posted when the office re-opens.



## Scholarship Winners Announced

**K**ayla Bischer and Brandon Gregg have each won a \$1,000 scholarship from the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA).

Kayla, daughter of Thumb Electric Co-op members Daniel and Sharon Bischer, graduated from Harbor Beach High School with an academic letter for maintaining a 4.0 GPA. She was class vice-president for three years, a member of the National Honor Society, played varsity softball for four years, and received three all-conference scholar-athlete awards. Kayla plans to study accounting in college.

Brandon, son of Midwest Energy members Clarence



Kayla Bischer



Brandon Gregg

and Katrina Gregg, graduated from Edwardsburg High School where he served on the student council, the National Honor Society, and received an academic award for excellence. He also received a Michigan High School Athletic Association Scholar Athlete Award this year. Brandon played varsity football, ice hockey and ran track, and he has been very active in 4-H. He plans to go to medical school and become an anesthesiologist.

A total of 156 scholarship applications were received by MECA, which publishes *Michigan Country Lines* for the state's nine electric co-ops.



### Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Heat from sunlight coming through windows and hitting the roof can increase air conditioner use significantly. Use shade trees and shrubs in landscaping design to reduce cooling costs. Block heat in the summer—but let it through in the winter—with deciduous trees, which will lose their leaves in the winter.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

## MYSTERY PHOTO

Everyone who identifies the correct location of the photo below by **August 10** will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 coupon redeemable for electricity from your electric cooperative.

**We will no longer accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone!**

Email [mysteryphoto@countrylines.com](mailto:mysteryphoto@countrylines.com), or send by mail to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and co-op. The winner will be announced in the September 2011 issue.

The May contest winner is Debbie Nowak of Alpena, who correctly identified the photo from the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center in Alpena.



May photo

Do you know where this is? ▶



## Life-changing Experience!



Back row (L-R): Alyssa Zuiderveen, Grace Wiesner, Alli Rayburn, Katelyn Waters, Sen. Debbie Stabenow, Ashley Fogarty, Kaylee Kessler, Jenni Herrema and Dory Shaffer. Front: Justin Dahl, Carlos Portillo, Tyler Orlando, Heath Welch, Cade Dailey, Nate Millen, Matthew Richards and Allan Cramer.

**S**ixteen teens representing seven Michigan electric co-ops didn't expect a free trip to Washington, D.C., when they applied to attend Michigan Electric Co-op Teen Days in April, but that's what they experienced in June as part of the National Rural Electric Youth Tour.

The tour is designed to bridge the gap and personalize the relationship of youth and government, and they joined more than 1,500 students representing electric co-ops from across the country.

The Michigan teens visited memorials, museums and monuments. Highlights of the trip included guided tours through Arlington Cemetery, the National Cathedral, Library of Congress and U.S. Capitol, seeing a play at the Kennedy Center, and a riverboat cruise on the Potomac. The group also visited Sen. Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Reps. Dan Benishek, Bill Huizenga, Dave Camp and Fred Upton on Capitol Hill.

"The Youth Tour experience

changed my life. I was able to connect with history and establish my standings as an American," commented Jenni Herrema of Custer. "I am so grateful for this opportunity."



Tyler Orlando (left), a junior from Lake Isabella, was voted by his peers to serve on

the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Leadership Council. He will return to D.C. in July to attend a youth conference that strengthens leadership and public speaking skills.

Youth Tour participants are chosen by their co-op, who sponsors them on the trip. Participating co-ops included Cloverland Electric, Cherryland Electric, Great Lakes Energy, Presque Isle Electric & Gas, Wolverine Power Cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County, and Midwest Energy.

Learn more about co-op-sponsored youth programs at [countrylines.com/youth](http://countrylines.com/youth).

## Tell us about your favorite Michigan-made products!

Share a few paragraphs with us about your favorite Michigan-made product and we may write about it. Be sure to share why you like it and if you have a unique story to go with it, please send that, too. Email by **March 10** to [czuker@countrylines.com](mailto:czuker@countrylines.com) or send to: *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, MI 48864.



## More Michigan-made

I just read your article “Game On” in the latest issue of *Michigan Country Lines*, and saw your request for favorite Michigan-made products. Well, have I got a site for you! A few months ago, I created a new Facebook page called Favorite Michigan Products (no kidding)! There are daily posts about a variety of products made right here in our home state—beer, baked goods, spices, chocolate, hotdogs, baby goods, jewelry, fashion wear, and more!

There’s no end in sight when you really start looking. We make a lot of great stuff here! In fact, I just posted a link about the Carrom Company, which was the subject of your article.

I think it would be wonderful, and much appreciated, if you could post a bit of information about this new Facebook page in your next issue. The link is [facebook.com/favoritemichiganproducts](https://facebook.com/favoritemichiganproducts). If you “Like” the page, you’ll start to get a flavor for our daily posts in your own Facebook newsfeed. And in case you didn’t know, this page is open to the public, so anyone can post a link or comment, and a growing number of people are doing that.

Thanks for considering!

P.S. I am a Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op member, which is why I get your magazine.

—Jodi Bollaert

## About Wild Things

Get your great little magazine every month and have enjoyed reading the articles that make our electrical system available!

The May issue contained a “letter” that needs clarification, as it could influence a person to a major misconception of how to handle a wild creature (skunks).

Having the opportunity to

live in the great North, and being privileged to be part of a conservation system that allows hunting as part of their management practice, and even to keep predators in balance, through harvest is legal, and traditional.

Your magazine readers should be made aware that wild creatures have their own instincts and habits that must be addressed before you try to handle them. And if the unqualified person tries to remove one by putting the wild animal in a defensive position, the creature will defend itself.

To allow your readers to believe that any wild animal is easily handled is misleading and should be corrected.

Rabies are carried by certain wildlife species and if bitten by an infected animal, could cause a fatal viral disease.

Believe your readers should be properly informed.

—Doug Mummert, Gaylord

## Single Moms Are Strong, Too

Wow, I am still bristling over the “Strong Dads Make Strong Families” article. In an area where a lot of children are raised by only their mothers, in just a few keystrokes Lisa Doublestein has told us that our children are misfits, possible criminals and probably couldn’t find their way out of a room with only one door. To ease the pain of knowing that we are raising such devastated children, however, she has added “on average” so we don’t feel that all of our children are doomed to failure. Then she blames single mothers for part of the federal government’s budget problems.

I am delighted that Lisa’s husband is active in her children’s lives. However, there are reasons (and usually very good ones) for why mothers raise their children alone, and this article effectively slapped all single mothers in their collective faces and told us that we have failed our children miserably by raising them without a father. Shame on you. Interestingly enough, the sidebar

about things fathers can do to share their interests with their children are things that a single mother does do every day (and sometimes even better!).

I hope *Michigan Country Lines* will be more aware of the dynamics of their readers in the future.

—Yolanda Lyons

*You bring up good points about single moms that we should all be aware of. However, the article wasn’t intended to criticize them—merely to celebrate the value of dads near Father’s Day, and discuss facts about how some (not all) kids are faring and ways they might be helped. Thanks for writing. —Ed.*

## Vernors Ginger Ale

Having grown up in Detroit myself, I enjoyed the article by Marjory Priest about Vernors Ginger Ale (June). I too have memories of getting it if I was sick to my stomach, or occasionally as a special treat. I also remember reading the bottle label as a kid, and back then, it was called Vernor’s Ginger Ale and it touted that it had been “aged 4 years in wood barrels.” Currently, the label now reads “Vernors Ginger Soda” and it is “Barrel Aged for 3 years.” I have been wondering when this change actually took place and has the successful recipe for the

product been altered for any special reason? Any insight for the change would be appreciated and answer my curiosity.

—Barbara Wolf

## In “Ruff” Weather...



We received this pillow at an open house in Suttons Bay. Thought it was great, so did our cocker spaniel, Rockford. He has always carried around socks and things, but this pillow is his favorite. Of course we would like to see his picture in *Country Lines*, but either way we wanted to share this with you.

Couldn’t help but think of this as a possible caption: “When the weather gets ‘Ruff,’ Rockford, our cocker spaniel, depends on Cherryland Electric.

—Paul Dover, Lake Leelanau

## Bulbs Die Differently

Worried when you hear a compact fluorescent light-bulb (CFL) pop or sizzle? According to Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL), a nonprofit firm that tests and sets standards for electric items, CFLs die differently than their incandescent cousins. These sounds actually signal that the bulb is working safely in its final hours. Smoke, a popping noise, and even a slight odor are typical and do not pose a fire risk.



Traditional incandescent lightbulbs tend to burn out with a pop and a flash. When shaken, a familiar rattle confirms that the bulb needs to be changed. With CFLs, light dims over time and the lamp may produce a more dramatic exit, as noted above. Sometimes the plastic at the base of a CFL will turn black, which is normal in most cases as safety standards require application of special flame-retardant plastics.

Consumers should look for the UL mark on packaging when purchasing CFLs to know that it meets safety requirements. For more information, visit [SafetyAtHome.com](http://SafetyAtHome.com).



# New Bill Features Coming

You spoke, we listened, and the result is a new look to your Midwest Energy bill that will debut in August.

## Highlights of the new format include:

■ A graph on the front that provides your usage detail for the current billing period, the same billing period last year, and the previous month's billing period. It also includes the average temperature. Comparing this information, especially as it relates to temperature, will help you to better understand how your choices and behaviors impact your usage.

■ The meter number and reading information will appear in the box on the left, and the billing detail will appear in the box on the right. We have also included the specific kWh rates for the distribution, power supply and power cost adjustment lines and the propane price per gallon.

■ Customers with both propane and electric accounts will have separate pages for each service, but they will be enclosed in the same billing envelope. The bill stub will detail the amount due individually from each of the applicable services, as well as the total amount due.

■ The bill stub lists the current amount due with the due date. If you have a past-due amount, it will also list that amount along with the date it must be paid to avoid disconnection of service.

**YOUR ELECTRIC USE- KWH** Page 1 of 2

MPSC estimates EO will create average residential savings of \$2.92 per month.

ComperLine	Days	Total kWh	Per Day	Per Day	Per Day
2011 Billing Period	30	1256	42	42	42
2010 Billing Period	30	1256	42	42	42
2010 Last Year	30	1256	42	42	42

Account Number # 1007793 RATE: Res-M SERVICE ADDRESS: 911 Polcom Phone Road \$ Amount

Meter Number 9064236	Multipier X 1	Payments Received Since Last Statement	-100.00
Meter Reading 9481	Date 05/25/11	Balance Forward	59.78
Meter Reading 10746	Date 06/24/11	Penalty Charge	1.20
Reading Type Actual	KWH 1256	Monthly Service Charge	15.00
		Distribution KWH Charge	38.52
		Power Supply KWH Charge	63.80
		Power Cost Adjustment	28.90
		Michigan Public Act 295 Mandate	
		Energy Optimization (EO) Act	80
		Tax	5.88
		Load Management	4.00 CR
		Service Subtotal	\$ 209.88
		PASTDUE - PAY BY 07/09/2011	\$ 59.78
		CURRENT AMOUNT DUE ON 06/18/2011	\$150.10

Return this portion with your payment. ☐ Check here and indicate credit card used on back. Payment Enclosed

Account # 1007793	ELECTRIC CURRENT	DUE DATE 06/18/2011	\$ 150.10
John T. Doe	ELECTRIC PAST DUE	DUE DATE 07/09/2011	\$ 59.78
901 E. State St.	PROPAANE CURRENT	DUE DATE 06/18/2011	\$ 415.79
Cassopolis, MI 49031	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE		\$ 625.67

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# Engaging Washington

Michigan co-ops take the message to Capitol Hill.

**L**ike it or not, your member-owned electric co-op is deeply rooted in politics. The Roosevelt Administration believed it was the government's duty to supply electric power where private enterprise claimed it was not profitable, and therefore not possible. In 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) was created to bring electricity to America's rural areas. Thus began an interesting, and sometimes unusual, relationship.

While your co-op is democratically run by its members, state and national political decisions continue to affect how it works to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Recently, representatives from Michigan's electric co-ops joined nearly 3,000 others from around the nation for a legislative conference in Washington, D.C. The Michigan co-op group met with 11 members of Congress and their staff to communicate four key legislative goals that are important to your co-op:

## Access to Affordable Lending

Over 75 years of partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) makes it possible for co-ops to construct and maintain their distribution and generation systems.

Loans available through the RUS electric program help make these worthwhile investments possible. While President Obama's 2012 budget recommends an acceptable loan level, it would restrict two-thirds of the lending to renewable-related or carbon sequestration projects only.

Because several Michigan co-ops rely on the RUS loan program for a portion of their financing, your co-op leaders urged members of Congress to support the program, but to let locally-driven business decisions, not Washington, D.C., determine what type of projects are constructed. While co-ops support renewable energy initiatives that make good business sense, there is a greater need



for basic infrastructure—backup generation, poles and wires—here in Michigan.

Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed federal regulations governing the disposal of coal ash. This type of regulation would create significant compliance costs at coal-based generation facilities—where most of the electricity in the Midwest comes from—to levels that would force some plant closures and raise consumer electric rates.

Your co-op leaders support working with the EPA to ensure a consistent level of safe handling of coal ash, but also urged members of Congress to support policies that further the goals of reliable, affordable electricity—without overly-burdensome regulations.

## Development of Renewable Generation Incentives

Electric co-ops can play an important role in developing the nation's renewable energy resources. However, not-for-profit co-ops cannot directly utilize conventional tax incentives that Congress provides the for-profit energy sector. Electric co-ops pay state and local taxes, but as nonprofit utilities they do not have the federal income tax liability they would need to utilize the Treasury Grant Program and are ineligible to participate directly.

New renewable generation remains more expensive to install than conventional gas or coal generation. Your co-op leaders urged members of Congress to develop co-op-friendly incentives—such as renewable energy bonds or tax grant programs—that would allow co-ops to cost-effectively develop renewable energy generation.

## Continued Reuse of Coal Ash

Coal combustion residuals, or coal ash, are materials produced when coal is burned to produce electricity. When properly managed, coal ash offers environmental and economic benefits because it can be recycled into roof shingles, wallboard, bricks and highway construction materials.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Environmental

## Promoting Competition

The nation's antitrust laws are meant to protect consumers and the general public from businesses that try to stifle competition, but railroads are exempt. Lack of competition has allowed freight railroads to manipulate the market, reaping huge profits from coal delivery without marketplace or legal consequences. At several generation and transmission co-ops, low coal stockpiles have threatened the reliability of the electric system. Some have even been forced to buy more expensive foreign coal because they can't rely on timely railroad deliveries. When replacement coal is unavailable, co-ops must rely on more expensive natural gas. Both alternatives drive up consumer electric bills.

Your co-op leaders urged members of Congress to support the Railway Antitrust Enforcement Act. This legislation would force the railroads to comply with antitrust laws, and thereby provide co-ops with a more reliable—and cost effective—fuel for generating electricity.

We're forever grateful to the Roosevelt administration visionaries that helped make the dream of bringing electricity to the countryside a reality. And we'll continue to work with elected officials to provide our member-owners with a safe, reliable and affordable energy future.

Photo - © iStockphoto.com/Svetlana Foote

# Ways to experience LANSING

In the heart of Michigan, our capital city (the state's fifth largest by population) is a diverse region where people come together to enjoy music, food, recreation, the arts and so much more. Here are some highlights. **Lori Lanspeary**



Photos - Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau

## Capitol ◀

Step back into the Victorian era with a visit to Michigan's award-winning Capitol Building. Designed by Elijah E. Myers, one of the foremost architects of public buildings during the Gilded Age (1865-1914), construction took six years to finish and has over nine acres of hand-painted surfaces. The building was dedicated to Michigan citizens in 1879 and underwent an extensive three-year restoration that was completed in 1992, removing years of "modernization" including half floors and unsightly drop ceilings. This building is a national historic landmark and a state treasure. It's open to the public for tours weekdays, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Tours of the public areas and the House and Senate galleries are available every half-hour. Visit [michigan.gov](http://michigan.gov) to learn more.



## Potter Park Zoo ▶

This is Michigan's oldest zoo (1920), and is home to over 600 animals, many of them endangered. The zoo offers seasonal camel and pony rides, a Zoo-venir gift shop, concession stands and multiple interactive exhibits such as "Wings from Down Under." Purchase a seed stick and delight as birds flutter down to perch and nibble. Nestled in an oak forest, the zoo is a relaxing stroll that can be completed in two hours. See hours and fees at [potterparkzoo.org](http://potterparkzoo.org) or call 517-316-4222.

## Historical Museum

The Michigan Historical Museum surrounds visitors with history from prehistoric times through the late 20th century. Exhibits include a three-story Michigan relief map, a copper mine, one-room schoolhouse, and more. Explore all 26 galleries and the museum store with unique items reflecting the state's rich heritage. Open weekdays 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sun. 1-5 p.m. Free. [michigan.gov/museum](http://michigan.gov/museum) or call 517-373-3559.



## Lansing Lugnuts/ ▲ Cooley Law School Stadium

Enjoy good times with good friends as Lansing's minor league baseball team, the Lansing Lugnuts, celebrates its 16<sup>th</sup> season. Its family fun at an affordable price, so don't miss out on the action and your chance to "GO NUTS." Admission starts at \$8. [lansinglugnuts.com](http://lansinglugnuts.com)



## OldTown ▲

Old Town is Lansing's historic boutique and arts district. The neighborhood's beautiful Victorian buildings are filled with unique galleries, tasty eateries, quaint specialty shops, creative businesses, nightclubs, and more. Voted one of the top places to bring visitors and the winner of IKEA's "Main Street Makeover," Old Town is an urban neighborhood with a small-town feel. This district also hosts festivals, gallery walks and farmers markets year-round and is "the place" for exceptional customer service. Located at Grand River Avenue and Turner Street, one mile north of downtown Lansing and at the northern point of the city's 13-mile River Trail. [iloveoldtown.org](http://iloveoldtown.org)





Photo – Greg Smith

## Impression 5 Science Center

Impression 5 is a hands-on learning environment that challenges visitors to experience, discover and explore! Exhibits include “Bubbles,” “Throwing Things,” “Light & Color,” “Electricity & Magnetism,” the “Giant Eye,” and more. After exploring the exhibits, make “Slime,” and shop in the Science Store! And, don’t miss the newly opened First Impressions Room for young explorers ages 0–4 years old and their caregivers. Open Mon.–Fri., 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.–7 p.m., Sun. noon–5 p.m. Admission: Ages 5 and up \$5, ages 0–4 pay your age. 10 percent discount for seniors/grandparents. [impression5.org](http://impression5.org) or call 517-485-8116.

## Lansing Metro Marinas

Lansing Metro Marinas provides river boat tours, private cruises and taxi services on the Grand River. The pontoon rides let you experience all of the new vibrant downtown Lansing developments and natural surroundings from the water’s view. Hop aboard outside of the new Lansing City Market, water conditions permitting. Mon.–Fri., 11 a.m.–2:30

p.m., 5–8 p.m., Sat.–Sun. 11 a.m.–5 p.m. [metromarinas.com](http://metromarinas.com) or call 517-410-0801.

## Lansing City Market

An urban public market with a diverse merchant mix begins its second 100 years in a new state-of-the-art venue situated on the Grand River. Offering produce, meats and poultry, artisan breads and desserts, cheese and dairy, gourmet coffee, full-line grocery, ethnic, food and horticultural artisans. Open year-round Tue.–Fri. 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.–5 p.m. [lansingcitymarket.com](http://lansingcitymarket.com) or call 517-483-7460.

## Lansing’s River Trail

Among the largest in the country, the River Trail traces the banks of the Grand and Red Cedar rivers and connects comfortable parks, historic sites and urban activity centers for over 13 miles through Lansing and East Lansing. Public parking is available at regular intervals, including Saginaw and Oakland Avenues, Turner-Dodge House, Potter Park, and others. [lansingrivertrail.org](http://lansingrivertrail.org)

## Michigan’s Festival Capital

With over 58 area events and festivals, Greater Lansing sets the stage for you to enjoy a wide array of music and cultural events that are as diverse as they are engaging. From the quaint celebrations of surrounding communities to the heart-pounding week-long Common Ground Music Festival, the Lansing region invites you to come and experience a kaleidoscope of festivals and events!

## Coming up:

**July 11-17 • Common Ground Festival**  
[commongroundfest.com](http://commongroundfest.com) • 517-267-1502

**July 30 • Car Capitol Celebration**  
[reoldsmuseum.org](http://reoldsmuseum.org) • 517-372-0529

**Aug. 5-6 • Lansing JazzFest**  
[jazzlansing.com](http://jazzlansing.com) • 517-371-4600

Visit [lansing.org](http://lansing.org) for more, and [michigan.org](http://michigan.org) for surrounding area events.

## RE Olds Transportation Museum

This collection of vehicles and memorabilia is a tribute to the auto industry, courtesy of one of Lansing’s most prominent citizens, Ransom Eli Olds. The very first Oldsmobile, built in 1897, is on display along with antique REOs, Stars, and auto advertising memorabilia. This gift shop has diverse auto-related items. Open Tue.–Sat. 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sun. noon–5 p.m. Admission: Adults \$5, students and seniors (65+) \$3, family up to 5 \$10. [reoldsmuseum.org](http://reoldsmuseum.org) or call 517-372-0529.

# Taking an Energy Detour

Engaged co-op members are helping to reduce energy traffic and their electric bills.

**M**any electric co-ops are asking their members to help save energy during times of “peak demand,” which is the industry’s equivalent of rush-hour traffic—when power supply costs are highest. By working together, co-ops and members are reducing energy use and higher power costs during these high-traffic periods.

Electricity can’t be easily stored, so it must be used as soon as it’s generated. As a result, electric co-ops must be ready to supply enough energy to meet spikes in electricity use. If energy use could be spread more evenly over time instead of peaking once or twice each day, fewer power plants would be needed and power costs would level out.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, electric co-ops, public power districts, and public utility districts can shave 6 percent of their peak demand—including about 1,440 megawatts (MW) of residential load—through programs known variously as demand-side management, load management, or demand response. These measures help keep electric bills affordable.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the nation’s bulk power grid watchdog, estimates America needs to build 135,000 MW of new generation by 2017 to meet growing demand for electricity. Power plants on the drawing board, however, will only deliver 77,000 MW. To fill this gap, a 2009 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission assessment found that 150,000 MW could be offset by conservation and energy efficiency measures, or by lowering peak demand.

Efforts by co-op members to curb energy use during peak times may provide a detour to new plant construction, at least temporarily.

## The Rush-Hour Toll

We use a steady amount of energy, whether we’re at home or away. Refrigerators, air conditioning and heating systems, and appliances create base load power requirements—the minimum amount of electricity your co-op needs to reliably supply all of its members.

Lots of consumers tend to use electricity at the same time—in the morning to warm up the house and get kids ready for school, and after work when making dinner and settling in for the evening.

The price for power rises and falls depending on the fuel type (coal, natural gas, nuclear, hydro, etc.) used to generate electricity, and the fuel used often depends on when power is needed. For example, generating a steady flow of power with a baseload coal, nuclear, or hydro plant costs far less than starting up a natural gas peaking plant on a hot, humid summer weekday afternoon or extremely frigid winter morning.

As a result, when power is required during demand peaks, your electric co-op—and you the co-op member—pay a steep toll.

## Detours Save Money

Up to 75 percent of your monthly electric bill goes directly to buying power—the rest must be stretched to cover bucket trucks, poles and wire, right-of-way trimming, payroll, and other operating expenses.

The easiest way to cut power costs is to use less energy—stay off the road—during rush hour. Some co-ops ask members to stop using energy when electricity use surges, an effort commonly called “Beat the Peak.”

“When we started our Beat the Peak program, everybody told us, ‘It won’t work, you can’t measure it, you can’t sustain it,’” recalls Bill Andrew, CEO of Delaware Electric Cooperative. “Today more than 35,000 of our members participate, and 10 percent of the co-ops in the United States have launched similar programs. That’s pretty good!”

With the help of in-home peak indicators and aggressive communications (text alerts, radio ads, e-mails, social media), this co-op cut 50 MW off its 345 MW summer peak.

In El Dorado, KS, Butler Rural Electric faced a 9 percent rate increase. To keep electric bills affordable, the co-op gave incentives for cutting energy use during peak times.

“By allowing our members to decide when to use electricity, they gained more power over their electric bills,” explains Travis Griffin, Butler’s member services representative. “After a year, we experienced only a 5 percent rate increase because members began shifting when they did certain chores, like washing clothes and running the dishwasher, to off-peak times.”

## Managing Traffic

Some electric co-ops take peak-shaving fur-

ther by installing load control equipment. Devices attached to electric water heaters, air conditioners, and other special appliances can cut demand by briefly switching them off—an action generally unnoticed by the homeowners who volunteer to take part.

“Our primary goal is to reduce peak demand and delay construction of new power plants,” explains Stephanie Cornett, senior analyst for East Kentucky Power Cooperative’s demand-side management effort called “SimpleSaver.” The Winchester, KY-based generation and transmission co-op and its 16 distribution members offers incentives to consumers who let them manage air conditioners and electric water heaters during peak demand.

“Comfort level is a common concern,” admits Cornett. “I tell participants, ‘You should experience no more than 2 degrees difference in your home, if that much.’ Our cycling strategies are frequent, with very brief on and off times—most people never notice a change.”

But the savings on electric bills adds up. “Our 2009 research summed it up simply: folks want to lower their electric bills,” notes Cornett. “For some, a bill credit is a big draw. Others want to support the environment. The bottom line is that most members want to help their local co-op cope with rising costs.”

In Delaware, electric bill savings have been hard to miss. “We lowered our wholesale power costs by \$10 million in 2009 and another \$1.5 million in 2010,” Andrew says. “We encourage, educate and inform our members about the role they play in Beat the Peak. Our members want to help. If you show people what they can accomplish, they show up big time.”

## Help Us Keep Your Electric Bill Affordable

The Michigan Electric Cooperative Association and your local electric co-op remain committed to providing you with affordable power, but there are some costs we can’t control. Our energy efficiency programs help you manage your energy use, and we’re deploying state-of-the-art solutions to help us control operating costs and improve service reliability. For more ways to cut costs, visit [TogetherWeSave.coop](http://TogetherWeSave.coop).



# Home Canning Gets Preserved

What warms body and soul better than a jar of home-canned food? **Gail Knudtson**

**T**he art of canning food is trendy again, and a Michigan man has invented a tool to help preserve it.

Loren Stieg, a tool-and-die maker by trade, invented the “Tattler Reusable Canning Lid,” during a shortage of the metal canning jar lids.

“A scarcity of canning lids, causing a frustrating market condition for home canners in the mid-’70s, led to exploring the feasibility of a plastic reusable product,” Stieg explains. Besides being reusable, the plastic lids won’t corrode.

The lids are made at Chippewa Plastics in Evart, which has produced over 1 million since startup in spring 2010, and are packaged and shipped from the Stiegs’ Reed City location. A new box design, tooling and rubber rings were finished this year and built by



Loren Stieg invented the Tattler Reusable Canning Lid.

Bawnco, a local tool shop. Stieg is proud that his products are “Made in the USA.”

Stieg and his son Brad figured if the business could survive and be stable for a year or two, they would have a good chance at success. “My son in Colorado has become my business partner, and at the end of our first year (March

2011) we have experienced more than 10 times projected sales,” Stieg says. They also now produce and ship from his son’s location in Grand Junction, CO, and ship to all 50 states, Canada, and other countries.

While most sales are online, the small company also has nearly 100 retailers sell-

ing the lids, and they have met with Hope Network (Moarc) of Paris, MI, to discuss a need for more packing capacity. Stieg says increased demand for the lids has meant more production, and therefore more jobs.

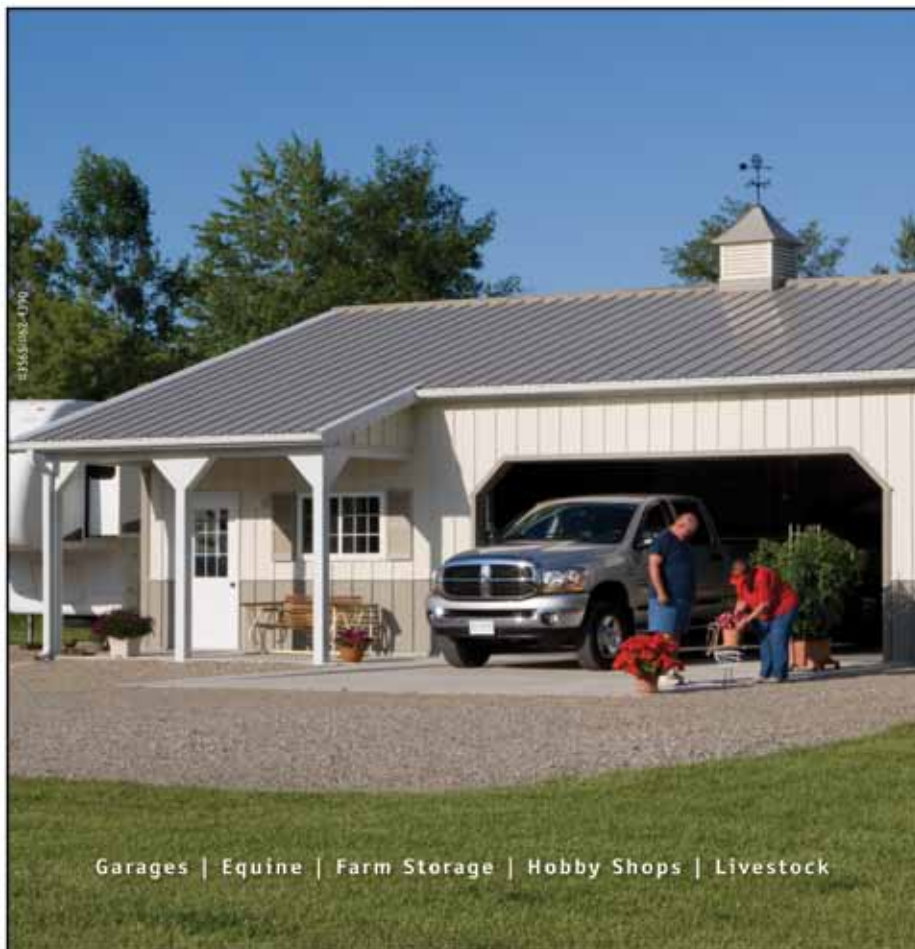
Other factors driving interest in canning are a desire for local, whole foods and recent food safety scares. “The home canning industry continues to thrive, and has seen a recent resurgence due to economic conditions, individual resourcefulness, increased self-sufficiency, and a bit of nostalgia,” he says.

The reusable lid saves money and time, he adds, and “...are fantastic for those of us who wish to reduce, reuse and recycle.” The BPA-free and FDA-approved lids work extra well for acid foods, like peppers, and some of his customers have used them for over 30 years.

A recent *Detroit Free Press* story notes that sales of home canning equipment is up 10 percent from last year.



Photos Courtesy-Loren Stieg



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# Kayaks Gain Paddlesport Popularity

**T**he view from the Hoxeyville Bridge, high over the Pine River, is a good place to see or photograph canoes in the season of paddling sports.

But slowly and surely, kayaks are catching up with canoes as a popular watercraft for floating Michigan's streams; viewed from this bridge, it seems that more kayaks than canoes go floating downriver these days.

Women seem to be taking to the sport as much, or maybe more so, than men. A kayak is a lot lighter load to handle, launch and retrieve than a canoe, and this finds favor with lady paddlers.

At many of the established canoe liveries, including Baldwin Canoe Rental in Baldwin, Wisner's Canoe Rental and Powers Outdoors in Nawaygo, River Rat Canoe Rental in Grant, Kellogg's Canoe Rental in Hesperia, the Sawmill in Big Rapids, and many of the canoe liveries serving the Au Sable in Grayling, kayak rentals are reaching a par with canoes for day trippers. This trend is also appearing in the sales of adventure watercraft. Canoes are still first in total numbers on our streams, but kayaks are closing the gap more each season.

Eric Sharp, *Detroit Free Press* outdoor writer, once summed up the sport of kayaking this way: "Kayaking is like bicycling—the more you do it, the better you get and the more you enjoy it, and like cycling it can be enjoyed at many levels, from a casual, hour-long sunset cruise around the lake at the family cottage to week-long expeditions on wilderness waters."

Sharp noted that few other states can match Michigan for easy access to waters suited to kayaking. From four of the Great Lakes that border our state, to some 36,000 miles of streams and thousands more inland lakes, the kayaker can pick and choose water to match their skills or their idea of a pleasant paddle.

Our state also has several national forests where kayaking access is easy. The Huron-Manistee National Forest offers nine rivers (AuSable, Big Manistee, Big Sable, Hersey, Little Manistee, Pere Marquette, Pine, Rifle and White) that have about 550 miles of stream suited to canoeing and kayaking



Photo - ©iStockphoto.com/Gene Chutka

within the Forest's boundaries.

Most river launches are for car-top boats, canoes or kayaks, except for those at some of the larger dam ponds.

Beginner and novice canoeists and kayakers should be able to handle most of the rivers, although log jams, sharp hairpin turns and fast currents on some stretches may challenge novice to intermediate paddlers.

Most state rivers (except a few of the larger watersheds) range from 20 to 80 feet wide, meandering through deep cuts in glacial sand and clay banks, then flowing over wide, flat, flood plains. The larger ponds, created by hydroelectric dams, provide slow lake canoeing and kayaking options. (High winds may present a hazard, so novice paddlers should watch weather conditions on larger open waters.)

There are a number of schools and training sources for kayaking newcomers, but if you are a woman, one of the best perhaps is offered by the Michigan DNR's B.O.W. program (Becoming an Outdoor Woman). This successful program has led the way for women (18 and above) to learn many outdoor

skills in the company of other women. Kayaking is one of the program's more popular summer courses, and includes six hours of intensive hands-on instruction.

"This course teaches participants how to paddle the proper way to make their experience on the water safe and more enjoyable," says Lynn Marla, BOW coordinator.

"We are very pleased to have top-notch women instructors lined up for our two-day workshops," she adds. The workshops are limited to 16 women to allow for individual instruction. Dates and a registration form are available at [michigan.gov/bow](http://michigan.gov/bow) or by calling 517-241-2225.

If you want to paddle your own canoe—oops, make that kayak—our region's rivers and lakes are the perfect place for paddle-sport fun.

*Don Ingle is an avid outdoorsman and award-winning outdoors writer that submits regularly for Country Lines.*





# Monkeyball Takes Hold

**O**n the first Saturday in August, a diverse and widespread community of leisure-sport enthusiasts knows to block out their calendars and avoid all wedding invites. They know to pack their camp chairs, kids, coolers, trail mixes and canopies. They know to hydrate and bring the “A-game” they’ve been honing for a full year—all for a sport called “Monkeyball.”

Monkeyball is known by many other monikers, including (but not limited to) Hillbilly Golf, Polish Horseshoes, Ladderball and Bolo Toss. However, devotees of this sport reject them all. Monkeyball, a game frequently seen at tailgate parties and backyard barbecues, is played with ladders made from PVC pipe and “monkeyballs”—two golf balls connected by rope. The object is to toss the monkeyballs onto the pipe ladder and outscore your opponent.

The unique distinction Monkeyball claims over other imitators rests in the regulations and formality of its events. Founder and commissioner Andy Frushour, a DeWitt, MI, resident, explains. “The difference between Monkeyball and others is that we have our own rule book (which varies slightly from other versions of the game), we have world rankings, we have fun t-shirts, and most importantly, we host the biggest ‘ladder golf’ tournament in the country—the annual World Championships.”

In 2011, the seventh annual Monkeyball World Championships will take place in Dimondale, MI. The tournament (known colloquially as ‘MB7’) will be on Aug. 6, with first matches beginning at 10 a.m. Competition is individual, and the tournament is partially seeded to accommodate both experienced players and those new to the game. Commissioner Frushour invites all to play. “Anyone is welcome to play in the 7th annual event—rookies & veterans, young & old. We’re expecting over 100 players, a third of which usually hail from the Lansing area.”

Frushour, who also claims the No. 2 spot on the Official Monkeyball World Rankings list (ranks over 550 players), is happy with how the game has taken hold.

“I’m the self-appointed ‘Grand Pooh-Bah’



Photo - playmonkeyball.com

The seventh Monkeyball World Championships (“MB7”) are Aug. 6 at The Old Orchard (3426 N. Michigan Rd.) in Dimondale, MI. See [playmonkeyball.com](http://playmonkeyball.com), or call 517-449-8256, for information about the sport and related events.

of Monkeyball. Since 2005, we’ve hosted over 100 tournaments across eight states with over 700 different players. And, we’ve had a lot of fun while playing this silly backyard game.”

While the tournament focuses on individual play, the camaraderie amongst the Monkeyball community spans across competition. With all ages welcome to participate,

it is not unusual to see a 5<sup>th</sup> grader advancing through the first round. A family-friendly event, the Monkeyball World Championships are an affordable and terrific way to spend an afternoon meeting new friends, playing a “new” game in an organized setting, and enjoying the outdoors.

—Andrea Osters

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# STATE OF MICHIGAN

## BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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### NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF

**ALGER DELTA COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, CLOVERLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE,  
GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE, MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE, ONTONAGON COUNTRY RURAL  
ELECTRIFICATION ASSOCIATION, PRESQUE ISLE ELECTRIC & GAS CO-OP, THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE,  
and HOMEWORKS TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE,**

**CASE NOS. U-16678, U-16681, U-16682, U-16683, U-16684, U-16685, U-16686, AND U-16687**

- Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association, Cloverland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative, Ontonagon Country Rural Electrification Association, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-Op, and Thumb Electric Cooperative plan to file Energy Optimization Plans in compliance with the "Clean, Renewable, and Energy Efficient Act" (2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001) and Michigan Public Service Commission Order in Case Nos. U-16678, U-16681, U-16682, U-16683, U-16684 U-16685, U-16686, AND U-16687, dated March 17, 2011.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write the Cooperatives' attorney, Mr. Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933, Phone: 517.374.9100 for a free copy of its application, which will be available on or before August 1, 2011. Any person may review the application at Dykema's offices or at the respective offices of the Cooperatives.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

**DATE:** August 9, 2011, This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

**TIME:** 9:00 a.m.

**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Administrative Law Judge Theresa A. Sheets

**LOCATION:** Michigan Public Service Commission, 6545 Mercantile Way, Suite 7, Lansing, Michigan

**PARTICIPATION:** Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 241-6160 a week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the August 1, 2011 joint application of the above named cooperatives to file Energy Optimization Plans, which include specific line item charges on customers' bills as follows:

#### **Energy Optimization Plan Charge**

For residential customers, a per kWh charge, not to exceed 2.2% of the total annual retail sales revenue.

For all other customers, an itemized charge not to exceed 1.7% of the total annual retail sales revenue.

The Commission has selected this case for participation in its Paperless Electronic Filings Program. The Commission recognizes that filers may not have the computer equipment or access to the Internet necessary to submit documents electronically. Therefore, filers may submit an original and one paper copy to the: Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, 6545 Mercantile Way, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, Michigan 48909. Otherwise, no paper documents will be required to be filed in this case. Requirements and instructions for filing electronic documents can be found in the Electronic Filings Users Manual at: <http://efile.mpsc.cis.state.mi.us/efile/usersmanual.pdf>. You may contact Commission staff at (517) 241-6170 or by email at [mpscfilecases@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscfilecases@michigan.gov) with questions and to obtain access privileges prior to filing.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by August 2, 2011. (Residential customers may file petitions to intervene using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon the Cooperatives' attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933.

Any person wishing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of his/her wish to make a statement of position.

A copy of the Cooperatives' request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at <http://efile.mpsc.cis.state.mi.us/efile> and at the office of Dykema Gossett PLLC, or the respective cooperative office, on or before February 18, 2008. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 241-6170.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.51 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6h et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

Dated: June 30, 2011, Lansing, Michigan





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# Eggplant

## recipes



Eggplant has a reputation as a versatile vegetable even though it's technically a fruit. Smaller ones are generally less bitter because they have fewer seeds. Find more recipes at **countrylines.com**.

### Ratatouille

3 c. eggplant, cut in 1½-inch cubes  
1 c. zucchini or summer squash, cut in 1/4-inch slices  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 small onion, sliced  
1/2 med. Anaheim chili pepper, cut in strips  
2 T. chopped fresh parsley  
1 T. chopped fresh basil or 1/2 t. dried basil  
2 T. water  
1/2 t. salt  
1/4 t. pepper

2 med. tomatoes, cut into eighths  
Combine all ingredients in a heavy saucepan or Dutch oven. Cover and simmer on stove top for 1-2 hours. Serve with chicken or lamb or over rice. Leftover ratatouille can be added to spaghetti sauce.

*Edith Heezen, Fowler*

### Caponata

4-5 c. peeled and cubed eggplant  
1/3 c. chopped green pepper  
1 med. onion, coarsely chopped  
3/4 c. sliced fresh mushrooms or 1 4-oz. can, drained  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1/2 c. vegetable oil  
1 6-oz. tomato paste  
1/4 c. water  
2 T. wine vinegar  
1/2 c. green salad olives, chopped  
1½ t. sugar  
1/2 t. oregano  
1 t. salt  
1/8 t. black pepper

In a large fry pan, combine eggplant, green pepper, onion, mushrooms, garlic and oil; cover and cook gently for 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Serve warm or well-chilled with crackers.

*Beth Kingsley, Belleville*

### Lamb and Eggplant

#### Meatballs:

1½ lbs. ground lamb  
1 T. minced garlic  
1 T. yellow mustard  
1 T. Worcestershire® sauce  
2 slices white bread  
1 egg  
salt and pepper to taste

#### Sauce:

2 T. olive oil  
1 small onion, minced  
1 garlic clove, minced  
2 stalks celery, chopped  
2 pts. sweet cherry tomatoes  
1 6-oz. tomato paste  
1 c. chicken broth  
1 T. ground coriander  
1 T. ground cumin  
1 cinnamon stick

#### Eggplant:

2 eggplants  
milk  
1 c. canola oil  
2 eggs, beaten  
1/2 t. salt  
1/2 t. pepper  
1/2 t. garlic powder  
2 c. Panko® breadcrumbs  
fresh mint  
fresh Italian parsley

Peel and slice eggplant into 1/2-inch slices. Place in a pan and cover with milk. Let soak about an hour to remove bitterness.

Meanwhile, in a bowl, combine lamb, garlic, mustard and Worcestershire sauce. Rinse bread slices under tap water; squeeze out water and shred. Add to lamb mixture along with egg, and salt-and-pepper to taste. Blend all ingredients well. Roll into 2-inch balls; place on a cookie sheet and bake at 375° for 30 minutes.

While meatballs are baking, combine 2

tablespoons olive oil, onion, garlic and celery in a large pot; sauté until onions are transparent. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, chicken broth, coriander, cumin and cinnamon stick. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste; add cooked meatballs; keep warm.

In a large frying pan, heat 1 cup canola oil. Remove eggplant slices from milk; discard milk. Combine eggs, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Dredge slices in egg mixture and coat with breadcrumbs. Fry in hot oil until brown; turn slices over and brown other side. Serve meatballs and sauce over fried eggplant. Remove cinnamon before serving. Garnish with thinly sliced mint and parsley leaves.

*Mary Gorshe, Suttons Bay*

### Grilled Eggplant

1 eggplant, do not peel  
olive oil

Italian bread crumbs

Wash eggplant; slice into 1/2 or 3/4-inch thick round slices. Dip each slice into a bowl of olive oil, coating both sides. Place each slice in a bowl of bread crumbs, cover evenly on both sides. Place prepared eggplant slices on freshly oiled grill and cook 10-15 minutes until fork tender.

*Bea and Bill King, Copemish*

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## Eggplant and Zucchini Lasagna

2 lbs. fresh ricotta cheese  
2 lbs. fresh mozzarella cheese  
1 c. grated Parmesan cheese  
4 eggs  
2 oz. fresh parsley, chopped  
salt and pepper to taste  
2 eggplants  
4 zucchini  
10 eggs  
4 c. all-purpose flour  
1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley  
4 c. bread crumbs  
4 c. tomato sauce  
1 c. Parmesan cheese  
1 c. extra virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper

In a bowl, mix first 5 ingredients together; mix well and season with salt and pepper to taste; refrigerate briefly to make mixture firm.

Slice eggplant and zucchini into 1/4-inch slices. Set zucchini aside. Fill a bowl with lightly salted water; add eggplant (only) and soak for 1½-2 hours.

Place flour in a shallow bowl. In another bowl, beat eggs with a fork until blended. In a third bowl, mix together breadcrumbs,

Parmesan cheese, parsley, salt and pepper. Line bowls up next to each other.

Carefully dip a slice of eggplant and zucchini into flour, making sure both sides are covered. Dip each slice into egg mixture and finally dip into bread crumb mixture. Coat both sides very well while gently tapping off any excess. Transfer to a serving plate, season with salt and pepper, and set aside while repeating with the remaining slices.

In a large, heavy skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add zucchini and eggplant slices; sauté on both sides until golden brown and cooked all the way through. Remove from pan; place on paper towels to drain excess oil.

In a large baking pan, add 2 cups tomato sauce, a layer of eggplant and zucchini, and then a layer of the cheese mixture. Repeat process 2 more times. Top with a layer of tomato sauce and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes. Serves 6.

*Jennifer Hansen, Mason*

## Turkey Eggplant Casserole

1¼ lbs. ground turkey  
1 onion, chopped

3 garlic cloves, minced  
1 large eggplant, cubed, about 1½ lbs.  
1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes  
1 green pepper, diced  
1 red pepper, diced  
¾ c. bread crumbs  
1 t. basil  
grated cheese, any flavor

In a large saucepan, brown turkey, onion and garlic for 5-6 minutes. Add eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, bread crumbs and basil; bring to a boil. Transfer mixture to a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Cover and bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes until vegetables are tender. Uncover; sprinkle with cheese and bake 15 minutes longer. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

*Marcia Albosta, Lewiston*



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# 'Hypertufa' Makes Gardening Easy

These containers with a goofy name are a fun gardening option that you can make yourself.

**Y**ou know the drill. Haul out your containers in spring, fill with potting soil, buy your plants, plant them. For the rest of the summer water every week, fertilize every other week. Then as winter approaches, pull out the dead plants, empty the soil, wash out containers. Come spring, start the process all over.

What if you could have a container that didn't require all that work? Just plant it once and let nature take its course, watering only during a drought and fertilizing...well, forget about it. 'Not possible' you say, but think again. Think hypertufa containers.

Hypertufa containers are made from a combination of Portland cement, peat moss, sand and vermiculite or perlite. They have the appearance of stone, without the weight, and can even be left out during Michigan winters without the worry of breakage. These containers look even better with age, getting a rich patina of moss and lichens reminiscent of garden troughs in a British countryside.

Glenda Hopps and her son Chris, of Farmbrook Designs ([farmbrookdesigns.com](http://farmbrookdesigns.com)) in Royal Oak, have been making and selling hypertufa containers since 2000.

"Hypertufa containers have a refined, rustic look. They enhance plants, providing a lovely gentle effect," Glenda says. When Hopps lost her job in the high-tech world, she decided to combine her love of gardening with a business venture. She noticed that gardening was one of the fastest-growing hobbies in Michigan. Since her son Chris was eager to look at other job possibilities as well, they decided to open Farmbrook Designs together.

It was at one of the many garden shows that Glenda met Karen Bovio. "We were a good match," says Bovio, whose love of gardening also lead her to start a business—Specialty Growers ([specialtygrowers.net](http://specialtygrowers.net)) in Howell,



This carefree, sun-loving hypertufa container is filled with hardy sedums. The large rock in the center is surrounded clockwise starting with a blue-green sedum *sieboldii*, a bright green sedum *tectractinum*, a yellow-green sedum *reflexum* "Angelina" and a grey-green sedum *canticola*. A few hens and chicks are tucked in the corners to complete this eye-pleasing design.

back in 1982. Bovio's nursery specializes in providing gardeners, landscapers and nurseries with high-quality, outdoor-grown perennials and herbs. "Today, there's lots of interest in succulent plants as well as drought resistant plants. This interest has increased the appeal of hypertufa containers," states Bovio.

Back when Bovio started her nursery, there were very few people selling perennials. It was a niche market. Today, with the explosion of different cultivars and a growing interest in perennials, there are a lot more gardeners planting them. When people think of hypertufa containers they often think of containers with sun-loving plants such as succulents like hens-and-chicks and low-growing sedums and miniature evergreens such as dwarf spruces and pines, but Bovio points out that miniature hostas, ferns and campanulas do well in hypertufa containers placed in the shade. Even a woodland setting is perfect for them.

For a showy look, Bovio adds that people do use annuals in hypertufa containers, including dwarf ornamental peppers, alyssum, trailing lobelia and calibrachoa, although more care is required.

The important thing to remember when stocking your hypertufa container is to pick plants that are shallow-rooted and miniature. Bovio suggests the following for containers placed in the sun: low-growing sedums or "stonecrops"; dwarf dianthus; creeping thymes (elfin or wooly); or hens-and-chicks.

For containers in shade and part-shade, choose small-growing ferns like maidenhair spleenwort or dwarf Japanese painted ferns, dwarf goatsbeard, viola syletta, alpine species of Columbine. An extensive plant list for hypertufas can also be found at [michigangardenerscompanion.com](http://michigangardenerscompanion.com).

As gardeners get older and downsize their gardens, hypertufa containers make great additions to smaller landscapes. Hypertufa containers add texture, interest, low maintenance and portability.

Hopps teaches a hypertufa-making class every summer at Bovio's Specialty Growers Nursery (July 23, 10 a.m.; click the "Events" tab at [specialtygrowers.net](http://specialtygrowers.net)), but she also offers tips for making your own. Hopps explains that it is much easier to use a mold, such as a foil pan, rather than putting the hypertufa material around an object. Also, line your mold with a plastic garbage bag, which makes for easy removal of the cement mixture once it has dried. It is important to make your mixture the right texture. It should resemble a crumb topping on a pie, but not be so dry that it falls apart as you are packing the mold.

Also, check your local nursery for hypertufas or type "how to make a hypertufa container" in Google or another internet search engine and you'll find how-to articles.

*Rita Henehan is freelance writer whose book, "The Michigan Gardener's Companion: A Insider's Guide to Gardening in the Great Lakes State" is available at bookstores and online.*



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# All Hands on (an Energy Efficient) Deck!

**A**dding a deck to a house, especially if you do most of the work, increases the home's resale value by several times the deck's cost.

A deck can actually be energy efficient in several ways. If having a deck allows your family to spend more time outdoors, then you should be able to set your central air-conditioning thermostat higher during the time you're primarily outside. Setting the thermostat higher, even for just a few hours a day, will reduce your electric bill.

If you are outdoors more often, you will become accustomed to the heat and be more comfortable indoors without as much air conditioning. Try to air-condition as little as possible.

A properly designed deck with a pergola or some type of tall side-wall, facing south or southwest, can also provide shade for your home. This is particularly helpful if it can shade an exterior glass patio door. Even with the most efficient glass in the door, a tremendous amount of heat transfers in through the glass when it is exposed to direct afternoon sun.

Besides saving energy, you can make environmentally friendly choices for the deck materials. For the framing, engineered lumber can be used instead of standard solid 2x2 lumber. Engineered lumber is stronger and often made from smaller wood pieces so less prime wood is required overall. Its strength may allow for fewer posts and longer spans without creating a springy feel.

The choice of deck material is most important. Pressure-treated wood is abundant, the least expensive material, has the nicest appearance and feel on bare feet, and is easy to work with for most do-it-yourselfers. The only environmental drawbacks to wood are its limited life and the cleaning and sealing chemicals which must be applied every year or two to extend its life.

Composite decking is another option. Trex® recently developed a new material, Transcend®, which is environmentally friendly. It is made from 95 percent recycled materials, primarily plastic bags and sawdust.

This decking is different from other composites in that it has a thin polymer top cap that reduces staining and mildew. It is more



James Dulley is shown installing composite decking using hidden fasteners. Since these planks are not as rigid as wood, it is important to make sure you have proper maximum spacing between the joists.

expensive than other composite materials, but its minimal maintenance makes it a reasonable investment.

Another option is cellular PVC decking. I used light-colored Azek® cellular PVC decking on a second-floor deck off my bedroom. It uses more virgin materials than composites do, but it is very durable, low maintenance, and does not stain or mildew.

If your deck is exposed to direct afternoon sun, selecting light-colored composite decking reduces the heat buildup and heat radiated to your house wall and windows. My first-floor composite deck is dark brown, and too hot to walk on barefoot in the afternoon.

Building a vertical wall on the southwest side of the deck fosters effective shading and provides privacy. The simplest design uses standard posts covered by lattice. The lattice openings allow breezes to pass through. Planting climbing vines along the lattice also enhances the natural cooling effect of water that evaporates from the plant leaves.

Another option for the shading wall is to

install horizontal slats. By tilting them at the proper angle, the direct afternoon sun can be blocked while providing ample area for breezes. The best angle depends upon your area's latitude and the deck's orientation to the sun. Make some sample cardboard slats to test for the best angle.

To block the sun from a more overhead direction, build a pergola over the deck. You can build one from lumber or buy a composite pergola kit. This is attractive, and by allowing plants to grow up and over it, it provides additional shading.

These companies offer alternative decking materials: Azek, 877-275-2935, [azek.com](http://azek.com); Timbertech®, 800-307-7780, [timbertech.com](http://timbertech.com); and Trex, 800-289-8739, [trex.com](http://trex.com).

*James Dulley is a nationally recognized mechanical engineer writing about home energy issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*





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And you can listen to any part of your music collection on your Wedge. From CDs and MP3s, to your favorite radio station, the Wedge plays them all.

The Wedge even stores up to 20 of your favorite radio stations

for quick and easy access.

To get the scoop on this new and groundbreaking technology, I spoke to the head of Product Research and Design for the Wedge, Paul Goodman.

**Q. How can you offer such a high quality sound system in the Wedge for only \$147 when the Leading Brand's radio goes for \$500?**

A. We have designed the Wedge Sound System from the ground up. All costs are closely monitored and, through a streamlined manufacturing technique, the Wedge is able to be offered at this ultra low price.

**Q. How can the tabletop Wedge Sound System produce such lifelike sounds?**

A. Our special engineering team has developed a revolutionary design enabling the Wedge to fill a room with crystal clear sound.

The Wedge has the perfect balance of power flowing to its speakers so the sound is crystal clear with the volume on low or high.

**Q. How easy is it to set up the Wedge Sound System?**

A. The Wedge is highly advanced but is a super easy-to-use sound system. All the fine tuning has been done for the consumer so all they have to do is plug it in and enjoy the Wedge's crystal clear sound.

No figuring out where to place multiple speakers and no confusing wires to hook up.

**End of interview.**

Readers can get the Wedge Sound System with a FREE Remote and FREE shipping and handling if they order within the next 10 days. Please see the Special Reader's Discount Coupon on this page. For those readers ordering after 10 days, we reserve the right to accept orders at the discounted price.

Plus you will get FREE Shipping and Handling! Complete and mail in the coupon at the right or call. If lines are busy, please try back - you don't want to miss out on a owning a high quality sound system for only \$147.



## Plug, Play, Listen

**Wedge Sound System shocks the music community!**

The new Wedge Sound System has music lovers buzzing with excitement. Never before has a such a high quality sound system been offered to the public at such a low price. Finally a high quality sound system anybody can afford.

Wedge has more features!	Wedge	Leading Brand
Price	\$147	\$500
Adjusts for Daylight Savings Time	YES	NO
Stores 20 Favorite Radio Stations	YES	NO
2 Separate Battery Back-ups	YES	NO
2 Separate Alarms	YES	NO
SD Memory Slot for Mp3s	YES	NO
Displays Day of Week	YES	NO
Nap Alarm	YES	NO
Remote Control	YES	YES
Able to Operate Without Remote	YES	NO
Play Music From iPod® (mp3 player)	YES	YES
#1 Pick in Survey	YES	NO

**Here's what a few of the thousands of Wedge listeners have to say:**

"The sound is so rich and clear from such a small piece. I was really amazed and pleased."

-Bronwyn M. Owens, Taylor, MI

"Radio has excellent sound. Its clarity is excellent and it's like people are in the room. Who needs a stereo system!!"

-Shelley Pearson, Poplar, WI

"Wow, you caught me off guard. The compact Wedge System sounds and looks great. I was very surprised..."

-Chuck Zabriski, St. Petersburg, FL

## SPECIAL READER'S DISCOUNT COUPON

Readers of this publication get a **FREE Remote Control and FREE shipping** (\$10.00 value) with this coupon and pay only \$147, if you order within 10 days. And get additional savings when ordering more than one. 2 Wedges are only \$139 each, and 3 are only \$133 each. That's a savings of up to \$42.00! There is a strict limit of 3 Wedge Sound Systems at the discount price - no exceptions please.

• To order by phone, call TOLL-FREE 1-800-588-5609 and give the operator your Offer Code: WDR321. Place your order by using your credit card. Operators are on duty Monday - Friday 6am - 3am, Saturday 7am - Midnight and Sunday 7am - 11pm, EST.

• To order by check or credit card, fill out and mail in this coupon to the address below.

This product carries a complete 60-day satisfaction guarantee. If you are not totally satisfied, your purchase price will be refunded. No questions asked.

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I am ordering within 10 days of the date of this publication, therefore I get a **FREE Remote Control**, plus **FREE shipping and handling**. My price is only \$147 for 1 Wedge, only \$278 for 2 Wedges and only \$399 for 3 Wedges. Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I am ordering past 10 days of the date of this publication, therefore I do not get the FREE Remote or FREE shipping and pay \$157.

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in: ☐ Check ☐ Money Order (Make payable to IHS)

or charge my: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard  
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## Public Act 295: The Clean Renewable and Energy Efficient Act

### Annual Energy Optimization Report Midwest Energy Cooperative MPSC Case Number U-15818

Midwest Energy contracted with the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) to administer the Energy Optimization efforts in order to comply with P.A. 295. MECA filed a 2 ½ year Energy Optimization plan with the MPSC on Feb. 18, 2009, as required by P.A. 295. This EO plan was approved by the MPSC on May 12, 2009, and we began launching energy optimization programs in June 2009. CLEAResult Consulting, Great Lakes LLC, was selected to implement the Residential, Commercial Industrial Programs, and the Energy Optimization (EO) website [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org). CLEAResult has subcontracted with Franklin Energy, JACO, Enercom, and the Michigan Community Action Agency Association to assist with EO program delivery.

In 2010, Midwest Energy collected \$679,426 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$520,148 resulting in an overcollection of \$159,278 which will be applied towards the 2011 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. Midwest Energy achieved 5,662.8 MWh of energy savings in 2009-2010. The full report can be obtained at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or at [michigan.gov/mpsc](http://michigan.gov/mpsc).

## Midwest in the Community



**Above:** Team Midwest members assemble "Friday Packs" for southwest Michigan kids. **Left:** Evan Bressler, customer care representative, adds his handprint to the Midwest banner for the date of volunteer service.

**Generous Hands** A team of eight Midwest employees spent a day at Generous Hands, a Vicksburg organization that provides backpacks of food every Friday to local school children at risk of hunger over the weekends. The organization was formed by a Bible study group of 10 women. What started in a closet-sized room at a local elementary school has expanded to a program utilizing hundreds of community volunteers to prepare "Friday Packs" for hundreds of southwest Michigan students each week from a 4,000-square-foot warehouse.

## Members-only Pricing!

For a limited time, visit your cooperative's office to purchase discounted energy efficiency products. Smart strips may also be purchased online with a valid account number.

Visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) for rebate information, a list of participating utilities and to order discounted power strips.

*IN-PERSON PURCHASES WITH CASH OR CHECK ONLY. NO CREDIT CARDS, PLEASE.*

**3 Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs for \$2**  
Limit 12 bulbs per eligible account



**Smart Power Strip for \$5**  
Limit 2 per eligible account

**Electric Water Heater Kit for \$4**  
Includes high-efficiency shower head, 2 faucet aerators and pipe wrap insulation  
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*Must be a Michigan resident and cooperative member to be eligible for this program. Items purchased must be installed in a home that receives service from a participating cooperative. For residential accounts only while supplies last. Restrictions may apply.*

[michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org)  
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Learn about all of your electric co-op's programs at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) • Questions? 877.296.4319

## BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

**PIANO TUNING PAYS** – Learn with American Tuning School home-study course. Tools included. 800-497-9793.

## CARS & TRUCKS

**LOW MILEAGE ENGINES** – Big savings. Price includes delivery and 1-year parts warranty. Mileage verified. Call today, 901-266-9996. [lowmileageengines.com](http://lowmileageengines.com)

## FINANCIAL

**100% USDA MORTGAGE LOANS** – Contact Aimee Smith, 989-799-2317, or [ASmith@AmeriFirst.com](mailto:ASmith@AmeriFirst.com).

## MISCELLANEOUS

**FREE BOOKS/DVDs** – Soon the “Mark of the Beast” will be enforced as church and state unite. Let the Bible reveal. The Bible Says, POB 99, Lenoir City, TN 37771. 888-211-1715. [thebiblesaystruth@yahoo.com](mailto:thebiblesaystruth@yahoo.com)

**PLACE YOUR AD** – [countrylines.com/classifieds](http://countrylines.com/classifieds).

## OUTDOORS

**SAWMILL FOR SALE** – \$4,995. New portable band saw, saws 36-inch x 16-feet logs. 231-288-0066.

**2.5 kW WIND TURBINE** – And 126-foot tower. Excellent condition, warranty, \$14,750. Serious inquiries, please, 906-892-8504.

**GARY'S STUMP GRINDING** – Cheaper by the dozen. 800-870-3871 or 231-587-9296.

## REAL ESTATE

**FOR SALE, KALKASKA, MI** – 100 seating, active restaurant with 2-bedroom home on approximately 5 acres, near many trails and lakes, \$279,000. Contact [swamplady59@yahoo.com](mailto:swamplady59@yahoo.com)

**9.9 ACRES LOGAN TOWNSHIP** – Mason County. Septic, well, power, great hunting, \$26,000 or make offer. 231-750-4129, leave message.

**163.8 ACRES, ISABELLA COUNTY** – Beautiful piece of hunting property. Small older trailer, small barn, electric, pond, mixture of cedar swamp, wooded rolling high ground and 20 tillable acres, \$320,000. 616-209-2230.

**MUSKEGON RIVER, RIVER FOREST** – Lot 17, near Hersey. 240 feet frontage, gorgeous sunset view down the river, older but functional mobile. Peaceful retreat. Asking \$42,900. 269-731-2822.

**BREVORT LAKE, UPPER PENINSULA** – 3-bedroom, 1-bath cottage. Stone fireplace, deck, storage shed on 100 x 740-foot lot. Call 906-293-8770.

**LUDINGTON WATERFRONT HOME** – On all-sports Pleiness Lake. 3-bedroom, 2-bath, \$179,900. MLS# 11022189, 616-836-1093.

**FOR SALE: 162 ACRES CANADIAN** – Hunting property, Iron Bridge, Ontario. An hour's drive from Sault Ste. Marie. Excellent hunting bear, deer, moose, small game. \$300/acre. Call 810-395-2345.

**WANTED TO BUY** – Low-cost trailer or small mobile on private lot with hook-ups. Newaygo or Osceola counties. 616-914-4381

**TRAVERSE CITY HOME** – Located on Silver Lake's desirable Brakel Point Dr. (#581). 3-bedroom, 2-bath, 1,768 sq. ft. set on a wooded lot. Priced as it sits at \$135,000. 269-208-7655.

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**WANTED: MAPLE SYRUP PAN** – 24 x 32-inch, good condition. 989-588-0399.

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**Energy Efficiency**  
*Tip of the Month*

Consider using solar lights for outdoor lighting. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Check manufacturers' instructions to make sure your solar lights are situated to receive sufficient sunlight to recharge each day.

– Source: U.S. Department of Energy

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# STATE OF MICHIGAN

## BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

### NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-16327

- Midwest Energy Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to reconcile its Energy Optimization plan expenditures and revenues for the 2010 calendar year.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Midwest Energy Cooperative, 901 East State Street, P.O. Box 127, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, (800) 492-5989 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Midwest Energy Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

**DATE/TIME:** August 11, 2011, at 9:00 a.m. This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

**BEFORE:** Administrative Law Judge Mark E. Cummins

**LOCATION:** Michigan Public Service Commission, 6545 Mercantile Way, Suite 7, Lansing, Michigan

**PARTICIPATION:** Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 241-6160 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the April 29, 2011 application of Midwest Energy Cooperative (Midwest) for authority to reconcile its energy optimization plan expenditures and revenues for the period ended December 31, 2010.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: [michigan.gov/mpscedockets](http://michigan.gov/mpscedockets). Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: [mpscedockets@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscedockets@michigan.gov).

If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 241-6180 or by email at: [mpscedockets@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscedockets@michigan.gov). Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by August 4, 2011. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Midwest's attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

Any person wishing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case, may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of his or her wish to make a statement of position. All information submitted to the Commission in this matter will become public information: available on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website, and subject to disclosure.

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure R 460.17315 and R 460.17335. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 241-6060.

A copy of Midwest's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: [michigan.gov/mpscedockets](http://michigan.gov/mpscedockets), and at the office of Midwest Energy Cooperative, 901 East State Street, Cassopolis, MI. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 241-6180.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 et seq., and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

June 3, 2011



# 2010 Annual Report

## Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited the accompanying balance sheets of Midwest Energy Cooperative as of Dec. 31, 2010 and 2009, and the related statements of revenue, patronage capital, and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of Midwest Energy Cooperative's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in "Government Auditing Standards" issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Midwest Energy Cooperative and subsidiary as of Dec. 31, 2010 and 2009, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

*Harris Group  
March 18, 2011*

## Director's Compensation Disclosure

Elected directors of Midwest Energy Cooperative are provided with \$300 per day for meetings attended on behalf of the cooperative. The chairman receives an additional \$50 per meeting.

## STATEMENTS OF REVENUES

Years ending December 31, 2010 and 2009  
(Dollars in millions)

	2010	2009
Operating Revenues	\$ 65,628	\$ 61,742
Operation & Maintenance Expense	55,902	51,986
Depreciation, Taxes, Interest, Etc.	9,496	9,318
Operating Margin	229	438
Capital Credits	1,516	1,556
Other non-operating income (exp)	984	641
Net Margins (LOSS)	\$ 2,730	\$ 2,635

## BALANCE SHEETS

Years ending December 31, 2010 and 2009  
(Dollars in millions)

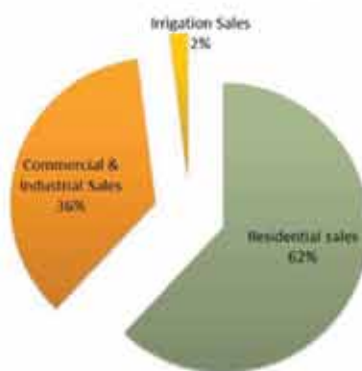
### ASSETS

Utility plant in service, net	\$ 95,249	\$ 93,414
Other assets and investments	16,072	14,269
Current assets	10,922	5,661
Deferred charges	4,683	4,018
Total Assets	\$ 126,926	\$ 117,362

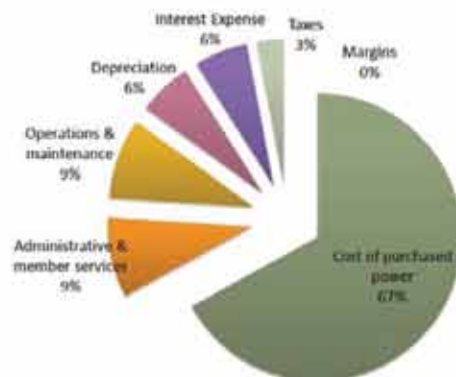
### EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES

Equities	\$ 34,935	\$ 32,126
Long-term debt	72,539	66,740
Accumulated operating provisions	2,999	3,475
Current liabilities	9,534	9,271
Deferred credits	6,919	5,750
Total Equities and Liabilities	\$ 126,926	\$ 117,362

Where Our Revenue Comes From



Where Your Dollar Goes



# More Close Encounters

In a previous column I wrote about the chance encounters I had with memorable people in July 1967, and I asked readers to share similar stories. Here are experiences from four of you.

## The Singer

“While attending a postmaster convention in Kansas City in 1980, my wife and I learned that singer Lynn Anderson was going to perform at an outdoor venue next to our hotel.

Much to our disappointment, we found out that her performance would be during our closing banquet so we would be unable to see her. As we were getting on the elevator on our way to the banquet, I was still complaining about missing her performance when the elevator door opened a few floors below ours, and Lynn Anderson stepped in.

I was so surprised that I couldn't even say hello!”

*Wayne Zwolinski, Petoskey*

## Navy Seals

“Girls weekend in Washington State! Friends for 52 years. Though face-to-face meetings are few, friendship and feelings are as close as ever.

Girl 1 arrives on September 10, 2001. Girl 2 is scheduled to fly in on September 12. Girl 3 flies from Detroit Metro at 8:45 on September 11.

I notice that the scenery seems closer than on previous flights across the country. September color is beginning to appear. A glorious autumn day filled with anticipation!

I recognize the plane taking evasive action! During a sharp turn, fighter jets fly overhead. We're going to be shot down! I begin to pray. The pilot at long last states: “We have a national emergency!”

We land in Kansas City to chaos. TV monitors capture and hold everyone's attention.

My only desire is to return to my family in Michigan. As a child during WWII in Europe, I know that did not always happen.

My uncommon name, correctly pronounced, comes over the loudspeakers, a never-before event for this frequent flier. A tall man, 6 ft. 2 in. or more, roughly my age, asks me to identify myself. I do!

Then I assert myself and say, “You know who I am, but how do I know who you really are?”

He pulls out a card and says I have a description of you, “Blonde hair, big blue eyes, and big boobs.” I know for certain that irreverent and irrepressible Girl 1 had given that description! All is well.

He tells me he is a Navy Seal, like my intended host. He and a companion Seal will take me to his home and we will work out plans.

Next day I rent a car and make my way successfully home to family and Michigan with gratitude.

Some folks are deserving of fame, but their heroic deeds are kept secret, known but to God and comrades-in-arms. These Navy Seals are among them.”

*Ilze Bailey, Alpena*



Dominic (Boston Red Sox) and Joe DiMaggio (New York Yankees) were part of baseball's greatest rivalry in the 1940s. The brothers get together during pre-game in 1949.

## The Sluggers

“As a high school sophomore living in Honolulu in 1943, I would often eat at a sports bar at the end of my block. Due to so many servicemen, management would seat waiting customers at the first empty seats, even with others at the table.

One day the owner, who knew me, seated me and my friend at a table with two soldiers.

He then asked, “Jack, do you know who you are sitting with?”

One did look familiar, but I answered, “I don't.”

He then introduced Joe and Dom DiMaggio. A nice conversation followed, and I still have their autographs.”

*Jack H. Myers, Toledo, OH*

## The President

“Thousands of Lithuanians escaped to the West from the oncoming Russian Army at the end of WWII.

Valdas Adamkus and I ended up in the same refugee camp in Bavaria, Germany. Being about 10 years older, he was an athlete and our hero.

Fast forward to Illinois in 1981. He had become an engineer and was appointed director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Midwest Region. After retiring, he was twice elected president of Lithuania.

On Oct. 3, 2009, he was honored in Lemont, IL, where he graciously signed an autograph for my grandson Gytis, and posed for a picture with me.”

*Romualdas Kriauciunas, Ph.D., Lansing*

I have my own “singer” story. When I was working for a photographic association in the '70s, we contracted with singer, actor and dancer Sammy Davis Jr. to be the spokesman for a national photography promotion. We met him in San Francisco for a photo shoot, and he invited us to his apartment on Nob Hill for drinks at the end of the day. Despite his gregariousness on stage, he seemed to prefer the privacy of his simple apartment. He was proud of his video equipment, which I recall as a professional Betamax system, which allowed him to watch movies he borrowed from the studios. He was especially proud of his cooking, and although he may have cooked for himself, there was nothing in his kitchen except canned food.

I was sad when we left, because he seemed lonely. Whenever I saw him on TV or in movies afterward, I realized how much he was really acting.

Thanks for sharing.

*Mike Buda is editor emeritus of Country Lines. Email Mike at mbuda@countrylines.com or comment on his columns at countrylines.com/column/ramblings*







# WATERFURNACE HAS A SMARTER WAY TO COOL YOUR HOME

Wouldn't it be nice to set the temperature of your house based more on comfort and less on your bank account? As the temperatures rise and the price of fossil fuels skyrocket, homeowners around the world are finding that a WaterFurnace geothermal system is a smart way to **reduce your carbon footprint and utility bills at the same time**. WaterFurnace units use the **clean, renewable energy found in your own backyard** to provide **savings up to 70% on heating, cooling and hot water**. It's good for the environment, great for your budget and thanks to a **30% federal tax credit**, now's the best time to act. Visit us at **[waterfurnace.com](http://waterfurnace.com)** to learn more and to find a local dealer.

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**Berrien Springs**  
WaterFurnace Michiana  
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Stratz Heating & Cooling  
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**Caro**  
All-Temp Heating  
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(800) 377-2272



**[waterfurnace.com](http://waterfurnace.com)**  
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In celebration of our family of customers,  
Midwest Energy Cooperative invites you to join us for

# A Day at the Zoo

Sunday, Sept. 11  
*Binder Park Zoo  
Battle Creek, MI*

Sunday, Sept. 25  
*Toledo Zoo  
Toledo, OH*



We will provide admission, a picnic lunch and an afternoon of family fun.  
Please select just one location. Tickets are limited to six per household;  
additional tickets may be purchased at the zoo on the day of the event.  
A confirmation letter with details will be sent two weeks prior to each event.

Reserve tickets online at [TeamMidwest.com](http://TeamMidwest.com) or by phone at 1-800-492-5989.  
Reservation deadline is Friday, Aug. 19.